

**Division for Historic Preservation**

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## Vermont Roadside Historic Site Markers

The State Historic Site Marker program commemorates facts, persons, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. The text for each proposed marker shall be reviewed and edited by the manager of the marker program and the staff of the Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) and shall be approved by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). The Agency of Transportation (AOT) is responsible for approving the site location in consultation with DHP and ACHP.

Thank you for giving your time and consideration to completing and submitting your application packet. We applaud your interest in and support of Vermont's heritage. We look forward to working with you.

### **Criteria for Evaluation of Roadside Historic Site Markers**

*(Approved by the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, October 2014)*

1. The site is associated with an event(s) that has made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history:
  - Site of an event of prehistoric or historic significance
  - Site marking unique, exemplary, or important surviving physical evidence of Vermont's past
2. The site is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past:
  - Birthplace of a significant individual
  - Burial place of a significant individual
  - Building or site associated with significant individual or group or business
3. The site embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values:
  - Exemplary example of a specific period of construction or architectural expression
  - Rare/unique method of construction
  - Representative work of master builder or architect/firm
4. During the selection process, the ACHP will also consider the following factors:
  - Reputation of the individual or group to be recognized
  - Interest of the public in historic context
  - Accessibility to the marker (ability to be viewed by larger public)
  - Enhancement of the setting and preservation of the site
  - Applicants ability to pay costs for installation and perpetual maintenance
  - Determination of local, state, and/or national significance

Please note the following rules and exceptions:

1. No marker shall be erected to commemorate a living person.
2. In order for an historic event to be eligible for commemoration with a marker, the event must have occurred at least fifty years ago.
3. A place or person must have attained its significance at least fifty years ago, although there are exceptions if the event, place, or person is of extraordinary historical significance.
4. Markers will not be placed to commemorate a building or structure that is no longer extant, unless one of the above criteria is met.

### **Procedure for Developing and Submitting a Roadside Marker and the Approval Process**

**1. Research and Write the Roadside Marker Text.** Research the topic by consulting multiple primary and secondary sources. Write a roughly 100-word text, following the “Highway Marker Writing Style” (see below). It is often helpful to seek assistance from local and regional historical associations and governmental entities in researching and writing the proposed text. Changes will likely be made by DHP staff to the proposed text to bring it in line with program criteria and writing style; edited text will be forwarded for applicant’s approval.

**2. Suggest a Suitable Marker Location.** The marker preferably should be placed on public land or a highway right-of-way. If it is on private land then the DHP must receive the owner’s consent. DHP and AOT staff will evaluate the proposed location based on its historic association with the marker subject and safety. Ultimately, AOT staff will have the final determination in approving and selecting the location based primarily on traffic safety. Be sure in your application to specify the highway route number and the physical site (e.g., U.S. Route 7, 0.2 miles south of Interstate 89) and indicate the location on a street or highway map accompanying the application. Photographs of the location must be provided.

**3. Submit Your Application Packet to DHP for Review.** DHP staff and advisors to the marker program will review all applications. After review, DHP will make a determination of whether the topic meets the marker program criteria. If the topic is considered appropriate for a state marker, the text will be formally presented to the ACHP for approval at one of its regularly scheduled meetings. The ACHP has final authority for the topics and content of all state markers.

All applications must be submitted 60 days before to the ACHP meeting.

**4. Work with DHP to Revise or Refine the Marker Text.** Before submitting a text for approval to the ACHP, a review committee composed of members of the ACHP, the DHP, and selected historians will review the text. Any major questions about the text that arise will be discussed with the applicant, including further documentation, if necessary, to support the marker text. If changes to the text are warranted, DHP staff will work closely with the applicant, or the applicant’s author, to produce a mutually agreed upon text. Because DHP and the ACHP bear the ultimate responsibility for what appears on a marker, they reserve the right to edit a text for accuracy, clarity, brevity, and thoroughness. Please be aware that a marker’s text must be limited to 765 characters (letters and spaces).

**5. Final Decision of the ACHP.** DHP will provide a applicant advance notification of when the marker will be presented to the ACHP at the appropriate meeting. The meeting is open to the public and applicants may attend. DHP will notify the applicant of the Advisory Council’s findings and any related comments. Once a text is approved, DHP will send the applicant a copy of the final board-approved text.

**6. Meet with the Agency of Transportation.** After the marker is approved by the ACHP, DHP will notify AOT and ask that it arrange a meeting with the applicant to visit the proposed marker location in order to review the site. **AOT is responsible for approving the site**, and may select another location if the applicant's choice is unsuitable for traffic safety reasons.

**7. Manufacturing and placement of the Marker.** DHP will contract and pay for the manufacture of the cast aluminum marker and have it delivered to an approved location. DHP will notify the foundry that casts the marker and provide it with the final board-approved text.

- Casting and delivery take approximately 60 days once the foundry has been notified.
- The community or the sponsoring organization shall be responsible for picking up the 12' aluminum post for pickup at the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth Notch, and for erecting the marker.
- The post should be fitted with bearing plates made of two-foot long (2' x 4") pressure-treated wooden bearing plates bolted perpendicular to the post at a point 6" below ground level. The applicant is responsible for providing the bearing plates. Additional directions on the installation will be provided upon delivery of the sign.

**8. Schedule Unveiling Ceremony.** The process for ordering and manufacturing markers is determined by a number of factors including the workload of DHP and AOT, the schedule and agendas of the ACHP, and manufacturing and shipping delays arising at the foundry; thus, DHP cannot be held responsible for meeting local deadlines for any planned dedication event. For that reason, if a sponsoring organization or individual desires to hold an unveiling ceremony, DHP should be notified and consulted well in advance about the schedule in order to coordinate with the foundry and AOT for the marker's timely arrival and installation by the community or applicant prior to a ceremony. The applicant should only fix scheduling of a ceremony after DHP and the foundry can confirm a realistic shipping date for a marker. The marker's applicant/sponsor will arrange publicity for unveiling ceremony in cooperation with DHP.

### **Roadside Historic Site Marker Writing Style**

To ensure stylistic consistency among state markers, DHP staff will revise and edit draft texts. The goal is to provide as much accurate and interesting information as possible in a limited space. Applicants can help by following these suggestions when writing their drafts.

- Aim for 90 to 100 words; it is better to be a little long than short for editing
- Spell out numbers less than 10, otherwise use Arabic numerals (one, two, etc., but 10, 237, 10,000, etc.).
- Do not use honorary titles such as Mr. and Mrs., but do use and abbreviate occupational titles and ranks (the Rev., Col., Maj. Gen., Dr., etc.).
- Do not use commas before or after Jr., Sr., II, etc. (e.g. Joseph Smith Jr. founded the Latter Day Saint movement).
- Write nicknames as follows: Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley.
- On first use, give a person's full name as he or she used it or as it is best known (e.g. Frederick Billings, Maria von Trapp, Chester A. Arthur), but on subsequent use only the last name.

Markers are intended to present historically accurate information as objectively as possible. Therefore, markers will not editorialize or assign value judgment to events or people. Unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to establish authenticity without question, no "firsts" or other superlative terms will be used. As markers are intended to be permanent features of the landscape, please also avoid making observations in the text about current conditions of buildings or land. The text should be

submitted with the understanding that it will likely undergo further editing and revision by DHP staff in consultation with the applicant or original author.

Please remember that the marker may be read from a moving vehicle, so it is best to put the most important information at the beginning.

### **Placement of Roadside Historic Site Markers**

1. The marker shall be placed on a highway right-of-way as near as possible to the site it marks, at least 200 feet from the nearest adjacent sign.
2. Markers will not be placed on a curve or hill in such a place at which a slowing car could cause a traffic hazard. There should be a minimum of 500 feet visibility; 1200 feet is desirable.
3. Wherever possible the marker will be placed at a pull-off where an automobile will be able to park completely off the traveled portion of the highway. The pull-off should be 10 feet wide and between 200 and 400 feet long. The sign should be placed approximately 4 feet back from the pull-off.
4. The marker shall be located so that its post does not interfere with underground utilities. ("DIG SAFE")

**Roadside Historic Site Marker Application Form**

This form is designed to provide DHP with the necessary information to be able to evaluate the potential marker topic.

**Proposed Marker Topic:**

**Proposed Physical Location of Marker:**

(Please include a map and photographs showing the proposed location for the marker.)

**Physical address (e.g., 4588 Chester Arthur Road, 12 miles northeast of Fairfield):**

**Latitude/Longitude of location:**

**Town/City and County where proposed marker would be located:**

**Is the proposed marker associated with a “mitigation” agreement stemming from a Section 106 environmental review or Act 250 project? If so, please provide details about who is involved with the project and the appropriate project codes.**

**When is the proposed date for an unveiling or dedication ceremony:**

**Applicant's Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Author's Information** (if author of marker text is different from applicant):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Property Owner's Information:****NOTE: If the marker proposed is on a specific property or references a specific physical property beyond AOT right-of-ways, DHP needs the property owner's information and signature prior to reviewing the proposal.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Text for the Marker:** DHP staff will work closely with the applicant, or the applicant's author, to produce a mutually agreed upon text. Because DHP and the ACHP bear the ultimate responsibility for what appears on a marker, they reserve the right to edit a text for accuracy, clarity, brevity, and thoroughness. It must NOT exceed **765** letter and spaces (765 letter-spaces or 17 lines with 45 letters and spaces per line maximum). Use additional sheets as necessary.

**Bibliographical Sources Consulted.** Multiple primary and secondary sources are required. Please photocopy and attach each source. Each bibliographical source listed below should include the following information: author, title, and publisher, the publisher's location, and date of publication:

Send the completed application and supplementary materials in one package to:

**Roadside Historic Site Markers**  
Division for Historic Preservation  
National Life Building,  
Deane C. Davis Building, 6th Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501  
[Debra.sayers@state.vt.us](mailto:Debra.sayers@state.vt.us)  
802-828-3213

(DHP use)

Submittal Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended Reviewers: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisory Council Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Approval: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Updated October 17, 2014